

In the Claims

1. (Currently Amended) A method of binding a stack of sheets comprising:

providing first and second end leafs, with each end leaf including first and second sheet segments separated by a fold, with each sheet segment having dimensions that generally correspond to dimensions of the sheets of the stack of sheets;

providing first and segments of pressure sensitive adhesives, with each of the segments of pressure sensitive adhesives having a covered surface;

disposing the stack of sheets intermediate the first and second end leafs, with the folds of the end leafs being positioned proximate an edge of the stack to be bound and with the second sheet segments of the first and second end leafs being positioned adjacent the stack;

applying molten hot melt adhesive to the edge of the stack and to the first and second end leafs;

securing an elongated spine member to the edge of the stack by way of the molten hot melt adhesive;

exposing the covered surface of each of the first and second segments of pressure sensitive adhesive subsequent to the securing;

attaching a first edge of the elongated spine member to the first sheet segment of the first end leaf by way of the first segment of pressure sensitive adhesive; and

attaching a second edge of the elongated spine member, opposite the first edge, to the first sheet segment of the second end leaf by way of the second segment of the pressure sensitive adhesive.

2. (Original) The method of Claim 1 further comprising:

providing a hard cover assembly including first and second relatively rigid hardcover sections separated by a spine segment, with the first hardcover section

including a first pressure sensitive adhesive layer and with the second hardcover section including a second pressure sensitive adhesive layer;

attaching the first hardcover section to the first sheet segment of the first end leaf by way of the first pressure sensitive adhesive layer; and

attaching the second cover section to the first sheet segment of the second end leaf by way of the second pressure sensitive adhesive layer.

3. (Original) The method of Claim 2 wherein the attaching the first hard cover section includes:

exposing only a portion of the first pressure sensitive adhesive layer to produce a first exposed portion of the first pressure sensitive adhesive layer;

bringing the first sheet segment of the first end leaf and the first exposed portion of the first pressure sensitive adhesive layer into contact with one another;

exposing a second portion of the first pressure sensitive adhesive layer so as to produce an exposed second portion of the first pressure sensitive adhesive layer; and

bringing the first sheet segment of the first end leaf and the exposed second portion of the first layer of pressure sensitive adhesive layer into contact with one another.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1 wherein the first and second segments of pressure sensitive adhesive are disposed along the respective first and second edges of the elongated spine [[support structure]] member, with the first and second segments of pressure sensitive adhesive being covered by respective first and second release liners and wherein the securing includes wrapping the spine member around the edge of the stack and wherein the exposing includes separating the first and second release liners from the first and second segments of pressure sensitive adhesive.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 4 wherein the wrapping is carried out by a conventional binding machine of the type that wraps a conventional cover around a stack of sheets and wherein the elongated spine member and the first and second release liners are embodied in a configuration having a form factor $[[a]]$ of the conventional cover.

6. (Original) The method of Claim 5 wherein the sheets of the stack have a length and a width and the configuration form factor has one dimension that generally corresponds the length and a second dimension that generally corresponds to at least twice the width.

7. (Original) The method of Claim 1 wherein the first segment of pressure sensitive adhesive is disposed on the first end leaf and the second segment of pressure sensitive adhesive is disposed on the second end leaf, with the first and second segments of pressure sensitive adhesive being covered by release liners and wherein the exposing includes separating the first and second release liners from the first and second segments of pressure sensitive adhesive.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 7 wherein the securing the elongated spine member includes wrapping the spine member around the edge of the stack and wherein the wrapping is carried out by a conventional binding machine of the type that wraps a conventional cover around a stack of sheets and wherein the elongated spine member and the first and second release liners are embodied in a configuration having a form factor of a conventional cover.

9. (Original) The method of Claim 8 wherein the sheets of the stack have a length and a width and the configuration form factor has one dimension that generally corresponds the length and a second dimension that generally corresponds to at least twice the width.

10. (Currently Amended) A binding apparatus for use in binding a stack of sheets using a conventional binder that operates to wrap a conventional cover around the stack of sheets, said apparatus comprising:

an elongated spine member;

first and second pressure sensitive adhesive segments extending along respective first and second edges of the elongated spine member;

first and second release liner disposed over the respective first and second pressure activated adhesive segments, with the spine member, the first and second pressure sensitive adhesive segment and the first and second release liners being embodied in a configuration having a form factor similar to a form factor of the conventional cover; and

with the adhesive segments contacting both the elongated spine member and the release liners thereby functioning to secure the elongated spine member and the first and second release liners together and wherein the spine member and release liners of the binding apparatus are fabricated from materials such that the apparatus can be made substantially flat prior to binding and can be wrapped around the stack of sheets during binding.

11. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 10 wherein the sheets of the stack have a length and a width and the configuration form factor has one dimension that generally corresponds the length and a second dimension that generally corresponds to at least twice the width.

12. (Currently Amended) An apparatus of use in binding a stack of sheets comprising:

an end leaf including first and second sheet segments formed from a single folded sheet so that the sheet segments are separated by a fold, with each sheet segment having dimensions that generally correspond to dimensions of the sheets of the stack;

a spacer member attached to the end leaf and extending from the end leaf past the fold;

a segment of pressure sensitive adhesive disposed on the end leaf proximate to the fold and extending in a direction generally parallel to the fold; and

a release liner disposed over the segment of pressure sensitive adhesive.

13. (Currently Amended) A binding apparatus for use in binding a stack of sheets using a conventional binder of the type that operates to apply molten hot melt adhesive to an edge of the stack and to wrap a conventional cover around the stack of sheets, said apparatus comprising:

[[an]] a flexible elongated spine member having openings that permit the molten hot melt adhesive to flow through the [structure] spine member; and

a rectangular shaped release sheet attached to the spine member, with the spine member extending over the release sheet along a center of the release sheet and ~~with the release sheet and the spine member having a form factor which generally corresponds to that of the conventional cover~~ having a first dimension normal to the spine member which is at least twice a width of the sheets of the stack to be bound and a second dimension parallel to the spine member which is substantially equal to the length of the sheets of the stack to be bound and wherein the release sheet is comprised of a material such that the release sheet can be manually separated from spine member after application of molten adhesive has been applied to the spine member without damaging the spine member and wherein the sheets of the stack have a length and a width and with the form factor.

14. (New) A method of binding a stack of sheets comprising:

providing first and second end leafs, with each end leaf including first and second sheet segments separated by a fold, with each sheet segment having dimensions that generally correspond to dimensions of the sheets of the stack of sheets;

providing first and second segments of pressure sensitive adhesive, with the first and second segments of pressure sensitive adhesive each having a first surface covered by respective first and second release liners;

disposing the stack of sheets intermediate the first and second end leafs, with the folds of the end leafs being positioned proximate an edge of the stack to be bound and with the second sheet segments of the first and second end leafs being positioned adjacent the stack;

subsequent to the disposing, applying molten hot melt adhesive to the edge of the stack;

securing an elongated spine member to the edge of the stack by way of the molten hot melt adhesive;

subsequent to the securing, removing the first release liner thereby exposing the first surface of the first segment of pressure sensitive adhesive and then attaching a first edge of the elongated spine member to the first end leaf by way of the first segment of pressure sensitive adhesive so that the fold of the first end leaf is disposed intermediate the first edge of the elongated spine member and the stack of sheets; and

subsequent to the securing, removing the second release liner thereby exposing the first surface of the second segment of pressure sensitive adhesive and then attaching a second edge, opposite the first edge, of the elongated spine member to the second end leaf by way of the second segment of pressure sensitive adhesive so that the fold of the second end leaf is disposed intermediate the second edge of the elongated spine member and the stack of sheets.

15. (New) The method of Claim 14 wherein the providing first and second segments of pressure sensitive adhesive includes securing a second surface, opposite the first surface, of the first segment of pressure sensitive adhesive to the first sheet segment of the first end leaf and securing a second surface, opposite the first surface, of the second segment of pressure sensitive adhesive to the first sheet segment of the second end leaf.

16. (New) The method of Claim 14 wherein the providing first and second segments of pressure sensitive adhesive includes securing a second surface, opposite the first surface, of the first segment of pressure sensitive adhesive to the elongated spine member adjacent the first edge of the elongated spine member and securing a second surface, opposite the first surface, of the second segment of pressure sensitive adhesive to the elongated spine member adjacent the second edge of the elongated spine member.

17. (New) A method of binding a stack of sheets comprising:

- providing a binding apparatus which includes a release sheet and an elongated spine members disposed down a center of the release sheet, with the spine member having a plurality of openings disposed down a length of the spine member;

- applying molten hot melt adhesive to an edge of the stack;

- wrapping the binding apparatus around the stack, with the spine member being disposed over the edge of the stack and with at least a portion of the molten hot melt adhesive passing through the openings in the spine member; and

- subsequent to the wrapping, separating the release sheet from the spine member.